



## Town of Nantucket Capital Program Committee October 24, 2024 Minutes

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|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attending Members: | Jill Vieth, Chair, Peter Kaizer, Vice Chair, Christy Kickham, Dawn-Hill-Holdgate, John Kitchener                                                                                                 |
| Staff:             | Susan Carmel, Assistant Finance Director, David Gray, Sewer Director, Noah Karberg, Airport Manager, Arthur Gasbarro, Chair Airport Commission, Mariya Basheva, Airport Business Finance Manager |
| Absent:            | Howard Matz                                                                                                                                                                                      |

The Capital Program Committee meeting on October 24, 2024, focused on the \$6 million cost for two townhouse units at the airport, questioning its validity compared to other affordable housing projects. The committee discussed the need for due diligence, including comparing costs with other projects and consulting local experts. They also addressed the eligibility of police and fire personnel for the housing. Additionally, David Gray provided updates on ongoing sewer and stormwater projects, highlighting challenges with easements, cost management, and the potential for new revenue streams through stormwater regulations. The committee agreed to finalize their review of the requests for 2026 in the following week. The Capital Program Committee discussed the \$220 million total request for the upcoming year, noting it is six times the average of the past four years. John Kitchener emphasized the need for an independent evaluation, suggesting a comment on the unsustainable nature of such a large borrowing request. Christy Kickham proposed consulting with town finance for guidance on sustainability. Jill Vieth highlighted the importance of considering both individual project merits and the overall impact. The committee also discussed the strategic alignment with the Select Board's priorities and the potential impact of large requests on future evaluations.

### Action Items

- [ ] Clarify with the fire and police chiefs which specific positions would be eligible for the airport housing.
- [ ] Consult with the town finance director to get guidance on the sustainability of the overall \$228 million funding request.
- [ ] Provide a presentation to the planning board on the storm water management initiatives and regulations.

# Outline

## Roll Call and Meeting Kickoff

- Jill Vieth initiates the meeting, welcoming everyone and reminding them of the audio and video recording.
- Jill Vieth conducts roll call: Kaizer, Kickham, Hill-Holdgate, Kitchener
- Jill Vieth requests approval of the agenda – motion made by Kaizer, seconded by Kitchener. Approved 5-0.
- Vieth calls for public comment (none)
- The meeting transitions to discussing the airport housing project, with Noah Karberg invited to provide more information.

## Discussion on Airport Housing Project Costs

- John Kitchener raises concerns about the \$6 million cost for two dwelling units in a duplex, comparing it to other affordable housing projects.
- Peter Kaizer acknowledges the difficulty in digesting the numbers but supports due diligence to validate the costs.
- John Kitchener suggests comparing the project costs with other similar projects outside the airport to ensure validity.
- Christy Kickham asks Noah Karberg for a detailed explanation of the project costs and any additional factors that might influence the high cost.

## Clarification on Housing Eligibility and Project Scope

- Noah Karberg explains that the project cost is based on recent bid costs and actual biddable costs from the dorm project.
- Jill Vieth inquires about the eligibility of different first responders to live in the housing units, including EMTs and first responders from other departments.
- Noah Karberg clarifies that the housing is primarily for police and fire personnel, with some flexibility for dispatchers and other eligible employees.
- John Kitchener emphasizes the need for clarity on who qualifies as first responders to ensure the project aligns with FAA guidelines.

## Exploring Alternative Housing Solutions and Funding

- Jill Vieth suggests exploring the possibility of the airport building more housing units for other employees in the future.
- Art Gasbarro supports the idea but emphasizes the need to prioritize the current project and ensure it meets the needs of existing employees.
- Dawn-Hill Holdgate raises concerns about the cost comparison with other housing projects, citing a \$4 million triplex at Sherborne Commons.
- Peter Kaizer and John Kitchener discuss the need for due diligence and the potential for cost reductions through better procurement strategies.

## **Discussion on Stormwater and Sewer Projects**

- David Gray provides an update on the Sewer Maintenance and Operations (CMOM) program, highlighting ongoing repairs and replacements.
- David Gray discusses the challenges of securing easements and the impact of the force main project on the overall cost and timeline.
- Christy Kickham inquires about the progress and funding of the CMOM program, with David Gray explaining the allocation of funds and the impact of paving costs.
- David Gray outlines the design and funding needs for the Somerset area, including stormwater infrastructure and a proposed bike path.

## **Stormwater Regulations and Revenue Streams**

- David Gray explains the ongoing efforts to develop stormwater regulations and the potential for revenue streams through capacity fees.
- Christy Kickham asks about the effectiveness of previous I&I (inflow and infiltration) projects and the potential for additional revenue from stormwater management.
- David Gray discusses the collaboration with various stakeholders, including the land bank and conservation groups, to address stormwater issues.
- John Kitchener suggests involving the planning board in discussions about stormwater regulations and potential funding opportunities.

## **Coastal Resiliency and Stormwater Connections**

- Christy Kickham asks about the correlation between coastal resiliency and stormwater management.
- David Gray emphasizes the importance of stormwater management in addressing sea level rise and groundwater issues.
- David Gray highlights ongoing collaborations with various groups, including the land bank and conservation organizations, to address stormwater and coastal resiliency.
- The discussion concludes with a focus on the need for comprehensive stormwater regulations and the potential for public-private partnerships to fund and maintain stormwater infrastructure.

## **Next Steps and Meeting Conclusion**

- Jill Vieth suggests regrouping with Howard to finalize the report writing process for the upcoming meeting.
- The committee discusses the possibility of completing the report writing individually and bringing any unresolved questions to the next meeting.
- Jill Vieth proposes meeting on November 7 to finalize the report writing and address any remaining questions.
- The meeting concludes with a focus on the importance of collaboration and due diligence in addressing the community's housing and infrastructure needs.

## **Discussion on the Total Request Amount and Sustainability**

- Jill Vieth emphasizes the need to address the \$220 million total request in their report, especially for items going to the ballot.
- John Kitchener highlights the historical context of borrowing authorizations, noting that the \$60 million request for 2026 is significantly higher than previous years.
- John Kitchener argues that their role is to evaluate the requests independently, not to consider the sustainability of the total amount.
- Christy Kickham suggests consulting with town finance for guidance on the sustainability issue, as individual requests may have different merits.

## **Consultation with Town Finance and Independent Evaluation**

- Christy Kickham proposes consulting with town finance, specifically Brian, to get a clearer understanding of the sustainability issue.
- John Kitchener insists that their role is to evaluate the requests and provide an independent assessment, not to change their report based on finance committee opinions.
- Jill Vieth mentions that Brian and Sue will likely discuss the warrant and ballot items with the committee, providing an opportunity for consultation.
- Peter Kaizer explains that the finance committee has flexibility to vote on items, even if they receive a negative recommendation from the committee.

## **Impact of Large Requests on Future Evaluations**

- Jill Vieth discusses the potential impact of large requests on future evaluations, noting that some projects may not pass at the ballot despite positive town meeting votes.
- Peter Kaizer explains that the finance committee can vote to include items in the hopper, even if they receive a negative recommendation from the committee.
- Jill Vieth emphasizes the importance of considering the overall impact of large requests, not just individual items.
- John Kitchener suggests that their report should highlight the total amount requested and its implications for the town.

## **Challenges of Large Requests and Public Perception**

- Christy Kickham raises concerns about public perception of large requests, noting that people may not consider the merits of individual projects.
- Jill Vieth notes that the grass field project from FY24 initially was a low priority in the request itself but was passed by CapCom followed by the Finance Committee; it failed at the annual town meeting but passed at the ballot and then was approved at special town meeting.
- Peter Kaizer highlights the importance of maintaining the integrity of the rating system, even if individual opinions differ.
- John Kitchener suggests that the committee should consider both the top and bottom requests to ensure a balanced evaluation.

## **Alignment with Select Board Strategic Plan**

- John Kitchener proposes aligning the committee's work with the Select Board's strategic plan to ensure alignment with town priorities.
- Peter Kaizer explains that the committee's strategic plan should complement, not duplicate, the Select Board's plan.
- Jill Vieth suggests using the committee's RORI's for strategic planning, similar to how the Select Board uses theirs.
- John Kitchener emphasizes the importance of the committee's work supporting the town's long-term goals and priorities.

## **Final Thoughts and Adjournment**

- John Kitchener reiterates the need for a balanced evaluation of large requests, considering both the total amount and individual merits.
- Christy Kickham suggests that the committee should consider which items they would prioritize if they had to make tough decisions.
- Jill Vieth mentions that she looks at department requests to ensure a balanced evaluation, considering both high and low priority items.
- The meeting concludes with a motion to adjourn, noting the next meeting will be in two weeks.
- Peter Kaizer made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Christy Kickham seconds.  
Approved 5-0.